

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 248795
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 (ISO) R

DRAFTED BY PM/DCA:MARIETTI:RLW
APPROVED BY EA/ANP:EHURWITZ
PM/DCA:LBRECKON
S/S: LRFLEISCHER

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P 171739Z OCT 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 248795

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, XO

SUBJECT: US-SOVIET TALKS ON INDIAN OCEAN ARMS LIMITATIONS

1. PM DIRECTOR GELB ASKED AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR RENOUF TO COME IN OCTOBER 4 FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS. RENOUF WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE EMBASSY DEFENSE ATTACHE GEN. FALKLAND AND EMBASSY COUNSELOR COTTRILL. GELB BEGAN BY STATING THAT THE US HAD FOLLOWED THE EXACT COURSE WHICH WE HAD DESCRIBED TO THE AUSTRALIANS BEFORE THE TALKS BEGAN. HE NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN EXTREMELY GOOD ATMOSPHERE AND BOTH SIDES HAD SHOWN A SENSE OF REALISM.

2. GELB SAID THE SECOND ROUND OF US-SOVIET TALKS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN WENT WELL; ATMOSPHERE WAS BUSINESS-LIKE AND NON-POLEMICAL. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS. DURING FIRST DAY OF THE TALKS THE US TABLED A
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DRAFT TEXT OF AN AGREEMENT ON DECLARATIONS OF MUTUAL RESTRAINT. GELB SAID THE SOVIETS HAVE ACCEPTED THE BASIC OUTLINE OF THE US APPROACH -- AN INTIAL AGREEMENT TO STABILIZE THE RECENT LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE REGION AND THEN A SECOND STAGE OF TALKS TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE MUTUAL REDUCTIONS IN THE US AND SOVIET PRESENCE. THEY ALSO AGREED TO USE DRAFT US TEXT AS BASIS

FOR FURTHER DRAFTING WORK.

3. GELB SAID THAT DURING THE ROUND BOTH THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION DESCRIBED THE QUOTE RECENT LEVEL UNQUOTE OF THEIR MILITARY ACTIVITY WITH THE IDEA OF AVOIDING POLITICAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT WHAT WAS MEANT BY THAT TERM. WE STATED THAT OUR NAVAL PRESENCE CONSISTS OF: (A) MIDEASTFOR, (B) THREE TASK GROUP DEPLOYMENTS PER YEAR, AT LEAST ONE OF WHICH INCLUDES A CARRIER, (C) OCCASIONAL VISITS BY US SHIPS TO AUSTRALIAN PORTS. WE ALSO SAID THAT WE DEPLOY STRIKE AIRCRAFT PERIODICALLY TO THE REGION IN CONNECTION WITH ANZUS AND CENTO EXERCISES AND THAT US NAVAL FORCES ALSO PARTICIPATE IN THESE EXERCISES. THE US SIDE ALSO SUMMARIZED THE CURRENTLY-PROGRAMMED CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM AT DIEGO GARCIA.

4. THE SOVIETS DESCRIBED THEIR MILITARY ACTIVITY AS: (A) A CONTINUOUS PRESENCE OF 10 SHIPS, SIX OF WHICH ARE COMBATANTS, (B) DEPLOYMENT OF A CRUISER AND ITS ESCORTS ONE OR TWO TIMES PER YEAR, (C) OCCASIONAL TRANSITS BY A WARSHIP OR GROUP OF WARSHIPS. THE SOVIETS SAID THAT THEY DO NOT DEPLOY STRIKE AIRCRAFT TO THE REGION. THEY DESCRIBED THEIR MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BERBERA IN MORE DETAIL THAN THEY HAVE IN THE PAST. THEY CONTINUE TO DENY THAT THEY HAVE A BASE IN BERBERA, BUT NO LONGER DENY THAT THEY HAVE FORCES STATIONED THERE AND MAKE USE OF SOME FACILITIES FOR SUPPORT OF THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE.

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5. GELB SAID A LARGE PART OF THE TALKS WAS DEVOTED TO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING FURTHER DETAILS OF THE US AND SOVIET DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR MILITARY ACTIVITIES. IN THIS REGARD SOVIETS ASKED SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT FACILITIES IN AUSTRALIA:

A. SOVIETS SAID THAT IN 1975 AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER HAD ISSUED STATEMENT CONCERNING US-AUSTRALIA AGREEMENT TO CONSTRUCT A BASE AT COCKBURN SOUND. THEY ASKED WHY WE HAD NOT INCLUDED THIS IN DESCRIPTION OF US ACTIVITIES. US SAID THIS WAS SOLELY AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION AND THUS OUTSIDE SCOPE OF AGREEMENT.

B. SOVIETS ALSO QUESTIONED FUNCTION OF NORTHWEST CAPE AND PRESSED FOR AGREEMENT THAT NO NEW TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE REGION. US MAINTAINED ITS POSITION THAT TELECOMMUNICATIONS BE EXEMPT FROM ANY RESTRICTIONS.

6. GELB SAID THE SOVIETS ALSO RAISED QUESTION OF DEFINITION OF THE AREA AND GAVE US MAP PURPORTING TO SHOW OUT-

LINE OF INDIAN OCEAN AS AGREED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION IN 1952. THE MAP INCLUDED ALL

OF AUSTRALIAN COAST FROM CAPE YORK SOUTH OF NEW GUINEA
TO EASTERN COAST OF TASMANIA, INCLUDING MELBOURNE.
SOVIETS STATED THAT US, AUSTRALIAN, FRENCH AND OTHER
EXPERTS HAD AGREED TO THIS DEFINITION OF THE AREA. US
SAID WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DEFINITION WE TABLED IN
MOSCOW AND THAT WE COULD NOT BE GUIDED SOLELY BY VIEWS
OF A PARTICULAR GROUP OF CARTOGRAPHERS. WE UNDERTOOK
TO STUDY SOVIET MAP AND RETURN TO THIS ISSUE DURING
NEXT ROUND. US POINTED OUT THAT US APPROACH WENT
SOME WAY IN MEETING SOVIET CONCERNS THAT US WAS DEVELOP-
ING ITS FORCES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN INTO A STRATEGIC

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THREAT TO THE SOVIET HOMELAND.

7. GELB NOTED THAT UNDER STABILIZATION AGREEMENT NOT
TO GO BEYOND RECENT LEVELS, US WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT, (A)
DEPLOY STRATEGIC BOMBERS TO THE REGION, (B) SIGNIFI-
CANTLY ALTER STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF ITS SUBMARINE
ACTIVITY, OR (C) INTRODUCE FACILITIES DEDICATED TO
FORWARD SUPPORT OF SUBMARINES.

8. GELB SAID THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO HAVE ACCEPTED THESE
POINTS AS A FORM OF INDIRECT ASSURANCE THAT US WILL NOT
BUILD UP STRATEGIC CAPABILITY IN THE REGION. HOWEVER,
SOVIETS STILL PRESSING FOR LIMITS ON AIRCRAFT CARRIER
DEPLOYMENTS AND A BAN ON ALL STRATEGIC SUBMARINE
DEPLOYMENTS.

9. GELB NOTED THAT THE TWO SIDES AGREED TO MEET AGAIN
IN EARLY DECEMBER; THE LOCATION IS NOT YET FINALLY
DECIDED. SOVIETS HAVE SAID THEY WILL BE PREPARED TO
OFFER SPECIFIC CHANGES TO US DRAFT TEXT AND SEEM TO BE
INTERESTED IN REACHING A STABILIZATION AGREEMENT AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE. WE EXPECT NEXT ROUND OF TALKS WILL ALSO
DEAL WITH UNRESOLVED ISSUES, INCLUDING:

A. DEFINITION OF THE AREA;

B. QUESTION OF WHETHER AGREEMENT NOT TO CONSTRUCT OR
INITIATE USE OF ADDITIONAL FACILITIES SHOULD BE DRAFTED
SO AS TO PREVENT SOVIET EXTENSIVE USE OF ANOTHER
FACILITY IF THEY ARE FORCED TO LEAVE BERBERA;

C. QUESTION OF CONTINUATION OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY ON
DIEGO GARCIA;

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D. QUESTION OF SOVIET DEMAND THAT PRESENCE OF US ALLIES AND FORCES IN ADJACENT AREAS BE SOMEHOW TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN AN AGREEMENT.

10. AFTER HEARING GELB'S DESCRIPTION OF THE TALKS, AMBASSADOR RENOUF STATED THAT AUSTRALIA CONTINUED TO BE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE DEFINITION OF THE AREA QUESTION AND ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY CHANCE THE US WOULD AGREE TO THE AUSTRALIAN SUGGESTION OF DRAWING THE EASTERN BORDER OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE WEST OF AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING ITS 200 MILE RESOURCE ZONE. AUSTRALIA FELT THAT IT WAS IN A UNIQUE SITUATION IN THAT IT WAS THE ONLY NATION IN THE REGION THAT WAS IN A SECURITY ALLIANCE WITH THE US AND THUS IT NEEDED SPECIAL TREATMENT. AUSTRALIA WAS CONCERNED THAT IF A US-SOVIET AGREEMENT INCLUDED THE WESTERN COAST OF AUSTRALIA AND IF THE AGREEMENT WERE SEEN AS WEAKENING THE ABILITY OF THE US TO FULFILL ITS ANZUS COMMITMENTS THEN THIS WOULD BECOME A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE IN AUSTRALIA.

11. GENERAL FALKLAND ASKED IF PERHAPS THE US COULD NOT DEVELOP A FORMULA WHEREBY SHIPS INVOLVED IN EXERCISES WITH AUSTRALIAN SHIPS OFF THE WEST COAST MIGHT NOT BE COUNTED AS PART OF THE US INDIAN OCEAN DEPLOYMENT PATTERN. PERHAPS THE US COULD PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE THESE DEPLOYMENTS AND STATE THAT THEY WERE NOT RELATED TO INDIAN OCEAN MATTERS. OF COURSE, THIS WOULD MEAN THAT US AND AUSTRALIA COULD NOT ENGAGE IN JOINT EXERCISES WHILE MEANDERING THROUGH THE INDIAN OCEAN. GELB ASKED WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISES GENERAL FALKLAND FELT WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED UNDER AN AGREEMENT. GENERAL FALKLAND REPLIED HE WAS REFERRING TO EXERCISES SIMILAR TO KANGAROO NOW HELD OFF THE EAST COAST OF AUSTRALIA. MR. GELB SAID WE WOULD CONSIDER THIS IDEA.

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12. RENOUF ASKED WHY WE FELT THE SOVIETS WERE BEING MORE REASONABLE ON INDIAN OCEAN AND OTHER MATTERS? GELB REPLIED THAT HE FELT THE SOVIETS WERE NOW CONVINCED THAT THE US WAS TREATING THEM AS A WORLD POWER AND THIS MADE THEM MORE TRACTABLE.

13. COTTRILL ASKED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER STAGES

OF THE US-SOVIET TALKS. GELB SAID THAT THERE WAS A LONG-SHOT CHANCE THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT DURING THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS IN DECEMBER, BUT THAT THIS WAS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. HE ADDED THAT IF WE HAD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF REACHING AGREEMENT WE WOULD INFORM THE AUSTRALIANS IMMEDIATELY. RENOUF ADDED THAT, IN VIEW OF THE CONCERN FELT IN CANBERRA OVER THE FIRST STEP STABILIZATION AGREEMENT, IT WAS LIKELY THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD HAVE EVEN MORE SERIOUS DOUBTS CONCERNING POSSIBLE REDUCTIONS IN THE US PRESENCE.

14. GELB SAID THAT THE US IS PURSUING A COURSE WHICH WE FELT WAS SENSIBLE AND IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH THE US AND OF AUSTRALIA. WE ARE CONCERNED AT AUSTRALIA'S APPREHENSIONS AND WOULD LIKE TO ASSIST IN ASSUAGING THEM, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE DOMESTIC REACTION TO AN AGREEMENT. HE ASKED THAT THE AMBASSADOR CONSIDER IF THERE WAS ANYTHING WE COULD DO TO HELP OUT ON THIS QUESTION. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED TO CONSIDER THIS. VANCE

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S E C R E T STATE 248795

EXDIS MILITARY PLEASE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM SECSTATE WASHDC DATED OCTOBER 17, 1977
SENT CANBERRA IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 248795

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, XO

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OF AUSTRALIAN COAST FROM CAPE YORK SOUTH OF NEW GUINEA TO EASTERN COAST OF TASMANIA, INCLUDING MELBOURNE. SOVIETS STATED THAT US, AUSTRALIAN, FRENCH AND OTHER EXPERTS HAD AGREED TO THIS DEFINITION OF THE AREA. US SAID WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DEFINITION WE TABLED IN
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THREAT TO THE SOVIET HOMELAND.

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INITIATE USE OF ADDITIONAL FACILITIES SHOULD BE DRAFTED SO AS TO PREVENT SOVIET EXTENSIVE USE OF ANOTHER FACILITY IF THEY ARE FORCED TO LEAVE BERBERA;

C. QUESTION OF CONTINUATION OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY ON DIEGO GARCIA;

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TREATMENT. AUSTRALIA WAS CONCERNED THAT IF A US-SOVIET AGREEMENT INCLUDED THE WESTERN COAST OF AUSTRALIA AND IF THE AGREEMENT WERE SEEN AS WEAKENING THE ABILITY OF THE US TO FULFILL ITS ANZUS COMMITMENTS THEN THIS WOULD BECOME A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE IN AUSTRALIA.

11. GENERAL FALKLAND ASKED IF PERHAPS THE US COULD NOT DEVELOP A FORMULA WHEREBY SHIPS INVOLVED IN EXERCISES WITH AUSTRALIAN SHIPS OFF THE WEST COAST MIGHT NOT BE COUNTED AS PART OF THE US INDIAN OCEAN DEPLOYMENT PATTERN. PERHAPS THE US COULD PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE THESE DEPLOYMENTS AND STATE THAT THEY WERE NOT RELATED TO INDIAN OCEAN MATTERS. OF COURSE, THIS WOULD MEAN THAT US AND AUSTRALIA COULD NOT ENGAGE IN JOINT EXERCISES WHILE MEANDERING THROUGH THE INDIAN OCEAN. GELB ASKED
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WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISES GENERAL FALKLAND FELT WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED UNDER AN AGREEMENT. GENERAL FALKLAND REPLIED HE WAS REFERRING TO EXERCISES SIMILAR TO KANGAROO NOW HELD OFF THE EAST COAST OF AUSTRALIA. MR. GELB SAID WE WOULD CONSIDER THIS IDEA.

12. RENOUF ASKED WHY WE FELT THE SOVIETS WERE BEING MORE REASONABLE ON INDIAN OCEAN AND OTHER MATTERS? GELB REPLIED THAT HE FELT THE SOVIETS WERE NOW CONVINCED THAT THE US WAS TREATING THEM AS A WORLD POWER AND THIS MADE THEM MORE TRACTABLE.

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UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
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Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
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Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 890678
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-SOVIET TALKS ON INDIAN OCEAN ARMS LIMITATIONS
TAGS: PARM, XO
To: CANBERRA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b43dac2d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009